Chapter 1. Charisma, Religion, and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael

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FULL TEXT

1 The Legion of the Archangel Michael has been generally considered an unusual "variety of fascism" mostly because of its mysticism and religious ritualism.[1] Building on Max Weber's theory of charismatic legitimacy and on its numerous reformulations since it was first put forward by the leading German founder of modern sociology, this chapter aims at reinterpreting the Legion as a reactive regional movement of change based on the violent counterculture of a radical segment of the "new generation." It argues that Legionary ideology combined, in a heterogeneous but powerful synthesis, three main strategies of political mobilization: namely, a charismatic type of legitimacy, based on the millennialist cult of the Archangel Michael and the leadership of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu; the messianic

mission of the postwar “new generation”; and integral nationalism, including calls for “cultural purification” and “national regeneration” modeled on the pre-1914 French pattern of Charles Maurras, coupled with virulent anti-Semitism.[2] Among these elements, the charismatic component of Legionary ideology was the most integrative, shaping its message and accounting for its genesis, structure, and political evolution.[3]

Weber’s perspective on charisma illuminates a pivotal feature of the Legion, which has remained to date under-researched.[4] To be sure, although there seems to be an implicit consensus among students of Romanian fascism that Codreanu was a charismatic leader, no scholarly work has yet attempted to link the study of his leadership to Weber’s theory on charismatic authority, or to extend the concept to the study of the movement itself and its structure and organization. This chapter argues that the concept of charisma illuminates the relationship between religion, politics, and violence in the Legion’s ideology and practice.[5] It offers a conceptual umbrella in order to connect two major features of Legionary ideology that stood in apparent contradiction to each other, and have consequently so far been analyzed separately: its alleged Christian character, and its inherent violence and criminality. By exposing the built-in violent character of the movement, this perspective also confronts later Legionary propaganda, which emphasizes the religious character of the Legion but plays down its crimes as accidental or foreign to its spirit.[6]

Charismatic Leadership: Theoretical Mapping

Max Weber theorized, even before the outbreak of war in 1914, that charismatic authority was one part of a triadic typology of political legitimacy, along with legal-rational authority and traditional authority. He defined it as devotion to an exceptional leader and to the normative rules ordained by him.[7] Central to this type of authority is the concept of charisma (“gift of grace”), described by Weber as “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”[8]

Unlike the other two types of legitimacy, the charismatic bond has, in Weber’s view, an exceptional, highly intense, and emotional nature. It arises “out of suffering, conflict,” and out of “enthusiasm, or of despair and hope,” “in times of psychic,

physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political distress."[9] The authority of a charismatic leader is based on an emotional commitment, as well as on a belief in the leader's extraordinary personal qualities. Charisma also involves a social structure: a staff and an apparatus of services and means adapted to the mission of the leader. Those who have a share in charisma form a personal staff, a charismatic aristocracy composed of a group of adherents who are united by loyalty and selected according to personal charismatic qualification. Charisma has a revolutionary nature: being based on the "genuine glorification of the mentality of the prophet and hero," it rejects all external orders and transforms all values, breaks all traditional and rational norms. That is why Weber considered bureaucracy and charisma as opposites. While bureaucracy first changes the social and material order of the society and—*through them*—the people, charisma changes the people *from within*, through a transformation, a mutation in the proselytes'attitude.[10] Consequently, Weber regarded charisma as a necessarily non-economic power, one which is endangered when daily economic interests become predominant. Charisma is therefore transitory and "naturally unstable." It continues only as long as the leader can effectively prove that he is "the master willed by God."[11] Moreover, as a personal quality, it ceases to exist with the disappearance of its bearer. This poses the problem of succession or, as Weber calls it, the routinization of charisma.

Charismatic leadership has been generally called a feature of "generic fascism."[12] Yet its application has been confined until now almost exclusively to the case study of Hitler and the Nazi Party.[13] Studies of what has been generally called "peripheral" or "minor" fascisms in East Central Europe have proven more receptive to viewing fascism as a millenarian movement.[14] Eugen Weber described the Legion as a "cargo cult" triggered by a reaction to sudden modernization. For Zeer Barbu it represented "in a highly compressed yet well differentiated form what is normally known as a two-phase phenomenon, that is, the transition from a religious to a political movement in a developing country."[15] The current study dissociates itself from the approach that regards charismatic movements as "pre-political" manifestations in peripheral economies or post-colonial states. Instead, it draws on sociological and political science approaches which —building largely on Weber's theory—have attempted an "independent reformulation" of the concept of charisma in order to preserve its universality and to offer a more feasible methodology for its application to politics. In a rare

application of the concept of charisma to the history of the Balkans, George Th. Mavrogordatos combined charisma with the concepts of clientelist patronage and social cleavage to frame his study of mass politics in interwar Greece.[16] The following analysis applies Weber's conceptual framework and related theories to the study of the Legionary movement.

Charismatizing Nationalism: From Student Rebellion to Generational Messianism

The origins of Codreanu's charismatic cult are to be found in the nationalist student movements that swept Romanian universities in the period 1919–23.[17] To be sure, student rebellion was not a Romanian peculiarity in post-1918 Europe.[18] Yet beyond some general European features, student rebellion in Romania exhibited certain peculiarities due mainly to local social and ethnopolitical cleavages. Romania emerged from the Great War as a winner. The incorporation of the historic provinces of Transylvania, of the Banat and Bukovina from Austria–Hungary, and of Bessarabia from Russia doubled the Old Kingdom's size and population, and considerably strengthened its economic potential. In addition, comprehensive reforms such as universal male suffrage (1919), massive land redistribution (1921), and a new liberal constitution (1923) remodeled it into a parliamentary democracy, and granted full citizenship rights to Jews and other ethno-religious minorities.

At first glance, the prospects for the young generation thus looked brighter than ever. While universal male suffrage abolished class barriers to political participation, the administrative imperatives of the unified Romanian state also required an expansion of the state apparatus with young cadres. However, the new state was dominated by numerous sociopolitical cleavages. Although numerically dominated by ethnic Romanians, Greater Romania also encompassed a relatively high ratio of ethnic minorities—making up 28 percent of the total population in 1930, mainly Hungarians, Jews, Germans, and Bulgarians. Moreover, privileged under the former imperial order, these ethnic minorities in the new territories belonged to the category of "highstatus minorities" and were still dominant in the urban population, the liberal professions, and regional bureaucracy.[19] Romanian political elites perceived the domination of socioeconomic life by ethnic minorities as a major stumbling block in the process of national consolidation, a situation that brought the

“nationalizing nationalism” of the Romanian ethnic majority to the forefront.[20] In the first postwar decade, the process of “nationalizing the state” by the Romanian ethnic majority was shaped by the vision put forward by the National Liberal Party of the Old Kingdom. In order to compensate for the lack of a substantive Romanian middle class in the new provinces, the Liberal Party launched a strong cultural offensive that would rapidly produce a unified national elite. A central component of this process was building a national educational system. An unprecedented expansion in educational facilities increased the number of students to a record level. Students became the presumed allies of the Romanian political elites in their efforts at nationalizing the state, since they represented the “agents” of the state in the cities.[21]

But the prospective alliance soon turned against the ruling elites, generating an additional political cleavage between traditional politicians and the “new generation.” Students were the first compact “Romanian contingent” sent from the rural world, still accounting for over 80 percent of the population, into the hostile and still “foreign” urban environment.[22] They sought to use the unprecedented educational opportunities for upward social mobility. They regarded their diplomas as “certificates” of social success, expecting positions in the bureaucratic apparatus. However, the state administration had a limited capacity for absorption, which shank even more under the impact of postwar economic hardship. Material deprivation and job scarcity caused frustration and alienation, encouraging protest movements. Student discontent was soon turned against the ethnic minorities, whose superior social status was felt responsible for the poverty of Romanian students. Moreover, while prior to 1918 the superior urban status of Jews was “compensated” by their exclusion from state citizenship and substantive economic and political rights, nationalists claimed that the civil emancipation of ethnic minorities required by the 1919 Minority Convention granted Jews potential access to state jobs and resources, thus making possible their political domination as well.[23] Radical student organizations blamed the international community for the “forced” and “premature” citizenship given to ethnic minorities in Greater Romania, and disapproved of the slow pace of nationalizing the state promoted by the ruling elite. They agitated for the implementation of a *numerus clausus* in higher education, restricting Jewish admission to their small share of total population and thus curbing job competition from their intellectual elites.

The Vãcãreşteni. The founding members of the Legion, generically called the “Vãcãreşteni,” soon after their acquittal by the Turnu Severin jury in 1924 following their participation in a student plot. Later named “The Knights of the Annunciation,” they formed the charismatic nucleus of the movement, preserved their influence on the decision-making process, and were held in high esteem by the Legionaries. In the center is Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, with Tudose Popescu at his right and Corneliu Georgescu at his left. In the upper row, Ilie Gârneaţă on the left, Radu Mironovici center, and Ion I. Moţa on the right.

Charisma as Counterculture

The nucleus of the nationalist student movement was located in regional universities, where the new “Romanian order” was unconsolidated and the student body still dominated by ethnic minorities. Its main centers were Iaşi —the old capital of Moldova, Czernowitz—the capital of Bukovina, and Cluj—where the former Hungarian university had just been Romanianized. The most combative leaders were Ion I. Moţa, the son of a Romanian priest who had been active in the national movement in Austro-Hungarian Transylvania, and a law student at the University of Cluj; and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, a law student at the University of Iaşi, and the son of a highly nationalist secondary school teacher from Bukovina. In contrast to those leaders who wanted to confine student protest to the university campus, Moţa and Codreanu intended to transform the student movement into a rad-ical–nationalist organization. By 1923, when student mobilization began to fall off, Moţa initiated a desperate plot, urging his comrades “to finish the movement in a beautiful way by sacrificing ourselves, while taking with us all those whom we find guilty of betrayal of the Romanian interests,” such as corrupt politicians and Jewish bankers.[24] His proposal received enthusiastic support from a half dozen close collaborators, including Codreanu. But the group was

arrested before turning their criminal plans into action, and imprisoned in the Vãcãreşti Monastery. Following a wave of public sympathy and media support, they were soon released, except for Moţa. He remained in jail for an additional six months for shooting his comrade Vernicescu for alleged betrayal.

Although unmasked, the plot was ultimately instrumental in transforming the student movement into a radical nationalist organization. Benefiting from national press coverage, the group of nationalist leaders, subsequently called the *Vãcãreşteni*, became notorious and served as the nucleus of the future movement. As Codreanu later recalled, the mystical atmosphere of the monastery inspired their first common plans for creating an "army of youngsters educated in love for the country and fatherland," following the example of the *Action Française*. The new organization had to fulfill three roles: "1. To educate the entire Romanian youth in a military spirit. 2. To be an army of propagandists of the Legion. 3. To be the fanatical element of sacrifice for the national movement, toward the solving of the Jewish Question! This army was to be dedicated to the Archangel Michael—the one with the fiery sword." [25]

The events following the student trial also established the basis of Codreanu's cult, projecting him as the leader of this integral nationalism. On 25 October 1924, several months after his acquittal for participation in the plot, Codreanu assassinated Constantin Manciu, the police prefect of Iaşi, as revenge for his acts of repression against the student movement. After another controversial trial, Codreanu was yet again discharged. Moreover, his "heroic" gesture, as well as his acquittal, assured him an immediate popularity, transforming him from a regional into a national leader. In July 1925 his wedding ceremony took the form of a mass celebration, paving the way for his charismatic cult. A month later, Codreanu became the godfather to more than one hundred children born on the day of his marriage. [26]

In sum, the process of nationalizing the state in Greater Romania generated as a side effect a confrontation between the hegemonic official culture and a radicalized student counterculture, working by its own rules for its own radical aims. The main promoter of this counterculture was the *Vãcãreşteni*, formed by plans of criminal plots, the common experience of prison, and assassinations. Its creators were Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and Ion Moţa; they spelled out students'frustrations and put forward a mystical sublimation of their experience. In his fictitious spiritual autobiography, Moţa voiced the feelings of social inadequacy experienced by Romanian students of rural extraction, portraying himself as

being suspended between “the Old World” of the idyllic village life and “the New World, alienated from ancient mores and invaded by pagans.” (See Document 1.) His hero, Nuţu Doncii, was forced to sever his ties with the village community and to relocate to the city: “I found somewhere else another youth and plunged into another life. … I became a city dweller.” This experience was a source of great frustration and alienation: “I could not find peace in this world; I hated it and, in its turn, it hated me deadly.” Moţa thus underwent a process of self-stigmatization, by dramatizing the students’situation through victimization. The tension between self-stigmatization and the sense of guilt generated by their violent and unlawful response gave birth to charismatic claims.[27] In the process of charismatization, negative features were sublimated and declared as positive: students’material misery was portrayed as emblematic of the state of the Romanian nation, while their marginality was recompensed by their belief in being the “chosen ones,” making up an alternative elite.

After a brief affiliation with the anti-Semitic League of the National Christian Defense, the *Vãcãreşteni* decided in 1927 to establish its own organization, called the Legion of the Archangel Michael. In this way, they distanced themselves from the moderate nationalism of the previous generation and put forward a messianic call to generational solidarity under the banner of charismatic nationalism. We now turn to the charismatic genesis and nature of Legionary ideology and its success in channeling youth protest and appropriating the discourse of the “new generation.”

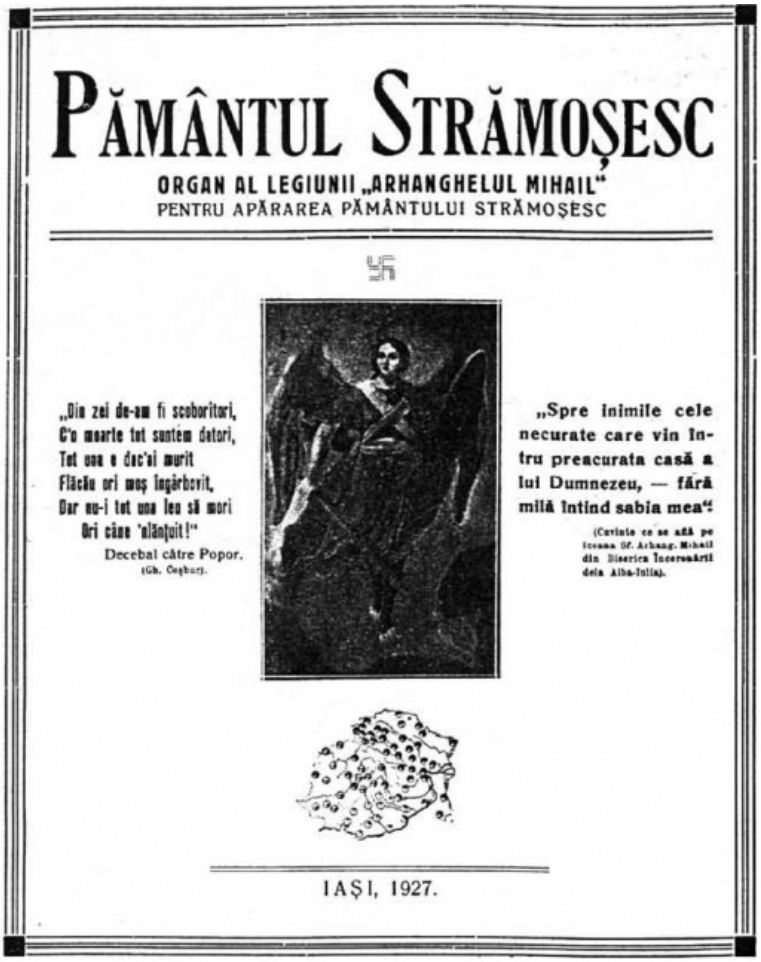
The Legion of Archangel Michael as a Charismatic Organization

The Legion of the Archangel Michael was founded on 10 July 1927 by the nucleus of activists led by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Its genesis was typical for a charismatic movement. (See Document 2.) According to Codreanu, the creation of the Legion was the fulfillment of a charismatic vision he had had in November 1923, while in prison. He professed that the Archangel Michael had appeared to him and urged him to dedicate his life to God. In the spirit of his vision, Codreanu proclaimed Saint Michael as patron of the new movement, one of the seven archangels who defeated Lucifer and his followers, expelling them to hell. The Archangel Michael became the object of a fanatic Legionary

cult: the religious commemoration of his name-day on 10 November was proclaimed the official holiday of the movement. The icon of the Archangel on the wall of Codreanu's prison cell, which allegedly inspired his vision, became the sacred relic of the Legion and was permanently guarded by a Legionary team.

The main source of Legionary ideology was thus the avenging figure of Saint Michael. Legionaries adopted an apocalyptic, dual vision of the world, portraying themselves as an earthly Christian army, as knights of the light in perpetual combat with the devil. Their writings were therefore dominated by the effort of defining and fighting the enemy. In their view, the main threat to Romania's national security was posed by the socioeconomic domination of ethnic minorities. In his analysis of the minority question in Romania, Ion I. Moţa established a hierarchy among the country's ethnic minorities according to their attitude toward Greater Romania. In the first category, he placed revisionist ethnic groups—such as Bulgarians, Russians, and Hungarians—who advocated the dismemberment of the Romanian national state. In the second category, he placed those minority groups that were not motivated by competing nationalist projects but were open to collaboration with the Romanian state, such as Germans, Slovaks, and Poles. The third category posed the main danger to Romania's national security. It was represented by Jews, who occupied "a special position" within Greater Romania, due to their tendency to monopolize liberal professions and to gain control of the country's political leadership. [28] Codreanu's and Moţa's writings, as well as the main Legionary journals, such as *Pãmîntul Strãmoşesc*, *Biruinţa*, and *Sfarmã Piatrã*, were dominated by virulent anti-Semitic manifestos. In their articles, the imminent "Jewish danger" that allegedly threatened the national community was transformed into an apocalyptic image and closely associated with an alleged universal conspiracy. In an analysis of the "conspiracy theory of history," Franz Neumann distinguished among five main variations: the Jesuit conspiracy, the Freemason conspiracy, the Communist conspiracy, the capitalist conspiracy, and the Jewish conspiracy. [29] Significantly, the salvationist formula proposed by the Legion was based on a "double" conspiracy theory, since it joined the Jewish and the Communist danger — in the formula of "Judeo-Communism"—thus adding to its proselytizing power. The Legion's anti-Semitism built on a local tradition represented by prominent Romanian intellectuals and politicians. Its apocalyptic component was an influence from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Translated into Romanian by Ion I. Moţa, and published in

1923, the book fit firmly into Legionary ideology as comprising “the concrete plans devised over centuries by Jews, for achieving their dream of conquering the world.” Moreover, in the postwar political environment, Communism was the concrete form taken by the Jewish danger, seen as “the work of Lucifer” and “a new attempt to destroy the kingdom of God.” [30]


PĂMÂNTUL STRĂMOȘESC

ORGAN AL LEGIUNII „ARHANGHELUL MIHAIL“
PENTRU APĂRAREA PĂMÂNTULUI STRĂMOȘESC

卐

„Din zei de-am fi scoborîtori,
C'o moarte tot suntem datori,
Tot una e dac'ai murit
Flăcău ori moș îngărbovit,
Dar nu-i tot una leu să mori
Ori câne 'nlănțuit!“
Decebal către Popor.
(Gh. Coșbuc).

„Spre inimile cele necurate care vin întru preacurata casă a lui Dumnezeu, — fără milă întind sabia mea“.
(Cuvinte ce se află pe icoana Sf. Arhang. Mihail din Biserica Încoronării dela Alba-Iulia).

IAȘI, 1927.

The cover of the official journal of the Legion, Pământul Strămoşesc (The Fatherland), is illustrative of Legionary symbolism. In the middle of the page is the venerated image of Saint Michael. Under this is a map of Greater Romania indicating major Romanian cities; the black spots show the proportion of the Jews out of the total population of each city, in an attempt to document the alleged “Jewish invasion” of Greater Romania. On the left is a quotation from the Bible attributed to Saint Michael and written on his icon in the Cathedral of the Coronation in Alba Iulia (where Greater Romania was proclaimed): “Against unclean hearts who come into the immaculate house of God I mercilessly direct my sword.” On the right side there is a quotation from the Romanian poet George Coşbuc, glorifying sacrifice: “Gods if we were descended from / A death we are still owing / It makes no difference if you die / Young men or hunch-backed old / But it is not the same to die / A lion or a chained slave.”

As a charismatic movement, the Legion put forward a salvational formula, based on the imminence of the apocalypse and encompassing strong messianic overtones.

In July 1927 Codreanu defined the leading principles of the Legion: (1) "faith in God"; (2) "faith in our mission"; (3) "love for each other"; and (4) "songs as the chief manifestation of our state of mind." Unlike a political party, the Legion had no program: "The country is dying because of lack of men, not programs." Instead, the Legion defined as its goal the salvation of the Romanian nation: "The final aim is not the life, but the resurrection. The resurrection of people in the name of our savior Jesus Christ." Significantly, while Jews were the satanic enemy, Romanians were portrayed—according to a symbolic substitution—as a chosen people: "God granted us, Romanians, a mission, conferred on us a historical destiny." This destiny could be fulfilled only through the efforts of the Legion. In his article "La Icoanã" (To the Icon), Moţa suggestively spelled out the Legion's goal as the national salvation of the Romanian people, under the charismatic leadership of Codreanu, and through the sacrifice of the Legionaries, as the "recipients of the rescuing force." (See Document 3.) The emphasis on salvation was defined as peculiar to the Legion, differentiating it from both Italian fascism and German Nazism. In a 1933 article in the journal *Axa*, the leading Legionary ideologue Mihail Polihroniade pointed out that "fascism venerates the state, Nazism the race and the nation. Our movement strives to fulfill the destiny of the Romanian people through salvation."

While sharing most of the features of a millenarian prophecy, the Legion's salvational formula reinterpreted them through Romanian national symbols and the country's specific sociopolitical context.[31] In the Legionary textbook *Cãrtica şefului de cuib*, (Booklet of the Nest's Chief) Codreanu spelled out a code of conduct and a set of ideological commandments on the manner in which Legionary salvation was to be achieved. The code of conduct combined military discipline with religious asceticism. It contained nine Legionary commands (referring to faith in God, self-discipline, dedication, and love of Legionary death), along with six fundamental laws "of discipline," "of work," "of silence," "of education," "of reciprocal help," and "of honor" (Point 3 in Ca˜rtica). Proper Legionary conduct was to lead to salvation by spiritual rebirth from within—through creation of the new man— and through sacrifice. In Codreanu's view, "the new man, or the renewed nation, presupposes a great rebirth of the soul, a great spiritual revolution of the whole people, in other words a fight against the spiritual direction of today" (Point 69). Through a significant mutation, spiritual rebirth and messianic salvation became the nation itself: "All the virtues of the Romanian soul should rejuvenate the new man. All the qualities of our race. In the new man, we should

kill off all the faults or tendencies toward evil" (Points 69– 70). The fundamental feature of the new man was his capacity for spiritual renewal through sacrifice. In order to attain the superior rank of a Legionary, a member of the Legion had to pass a series of initiations, as part of a sacrilegious version of *Imitatio Christi*: the would-be Legionary had to "receive on his shoulder the yoke of our savior Jesus Christ" (Point 56). The experience of suffering was thus central to the training of Legionaries. In Codreanu's view, without "the exam of pain, the exam of bravery, and that of faith, one cannot be a capable man, cannot be a Legionary" (Point 60). The propensity of sacrifice led to the cult of Legionary death, glorified as "the most sacred death among deaths." The political value that Ion I. Moţa attached to life-sacrifice accounts for the self-destructive character of the Legion: "The spirit of sacrifice is essential! We all dispose of the most formidable dynamite, the most irresistible instrument of fight, more powerful than tanks and rifle-guns: our own flesh and blood."[32] Legionary fanaticism led to the creation of "death teams" whose members carried out revenge missions at all costs, thus giving a terrorist character to the Legion. As a charismatic community, the Legionaries thus committed to a peculiar way of life and adopted a distinct mode of "want satisfaction," marked by salvation through violent revenge.

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu as a Charismatic Leader

The foundation of the Legionary ideology was the charismatic cult of Codreanu, proclaimed by Legionary propaganda as "a new messiah," the instrument sent by the Archangel to fulfill his commandments in order to bring salvation to the Romanian people. Ion I. Moţa, the second in rank in the Legion and its "gray eminence," spelled out the messianic scenario by way of which Codreanu became a main protagonist—namely, his divine mission, the revelation, the recognition of his charismatic authority over his followers, and the reverence for his leadership. Codreanu's charismatic claims were later synthesized by Ion Banea in his hagiographic work *Cãpitanul*, published for the first time in 1936. Banea portrayed Codreanu in multiple charismatic roles, as a religious prophet, spiritual reformer, predestined hero, and political innovator.[33] As a hero-fighter, Codreanu was represented as belonging to the local panoply of heroic figures, as the end result of a teleological line of the Romanians'historical development.[34] He was compared to great historical figures such as Moldavia's Prince Stephen

the Great, and was addressed with the title of “Captain,” inspired by the mythology of the *haiducs,* popular outcasts fighting for social justice. Legionary propaganda also emphasized Codreanu’s exceptional personal gifts, particularly his physical appearance and power of attraction, regarded as a confirmation of his charismatic qualification. Horia Sima, the later wartime leader of the Legion, elaborated on Codreanu’s physical charisma: „What was most impressive, on first contact with Codreanu, was his physical appearance. Nobody could pass him by without noticing him, without being attracted by his look, without asking who he was. His public appearance provoked curiosity. This young man seemed a god descended among mortals. Evaluating him according to the artistic canons of our civilization, one could say he was a synthesis between the beauty of the northern type and the ideal of beauty of ancient Greece. Looking at him, you felt dazed. His face exercised an irresistible fascination. He was a ‘living manifesto,’as the Legionaries used to call him.” [35]

Was Codreanu a “genuinely” charismatic leader? In order to distinguish between genuinely charismatic leaders and mere “frauds,” Robert Tucker has proposed a set of subjective and objective criteria for identifying charismatic leaders. Codreanu’s self-identification fulfills all the subjective criteria of Tucker’s test: namely, power of vision, sense of mission, confidence in the movement and in himself as the chosen one, and faith in the possibility of deliverance. The portrait of the leader put forward by Codreanu in his autobiographical work *Pentru Legionari* strongly resembled the archetype of a charismatic leader, focusing on power of attraction, courage, and “capacity for love.” While the portrait fulfilled an obvious propagandistic function, Codreanu’s fanaticism suggests, however, the internalization of the charismatic behavioral model. According to numerous firsthand accounts, Codreanu used religious language, practiced ascetic rituals such as fasting and praying, and imposed severe personal discipline upon himself. He constantly legitimated his leadership by way of his charismatic vision:

“From the first moment I have had the clear vision of the final victory. I have assumed the full responsibility of the leadership. From that time I have suffered many difficulties, dangers and innumerable risks, but this vision of victory has never left me.” [36]

Codreanu’s leadership also fulfills the objective criteria put forward by Tucker. Although a mediocre speaker, lacking Hitler’s mobilizing oratorical abilities, he was an “action hero,” distinguished by his nonconformist and counter-normative behavior. Educated by his father, Ion Zelea Codreanu, in a

highly militant nationalist spirit, Codreanu proved to have a remarkably combative attitude at an early age.[37] During his student years, Codreanu was the source of continuous trouble, being expelled by the university senate and readmitted to classes only at the insistence of his godfather, the influential anti-Semitic professor and politician A. C. Cuza. Moreover, although he never held an official position in the state apparatus, Codreanu succeeded in building a voluntary nucleus of faithful followers, becoming the object of a fanatic cult of personality.

How can one account for the mass response to Codreanu's charismatic claims? Many historians have tried to explain it from the narrow perspective of Codreanu's personal qualities, or—in apologetic terms—through his alleged "exceptional" personality. Significantly, while Codreanu was seen by his loyal followers as "exceptional," other collaborators such as Nichifor Crainic and Mihai Stelescu portrayed him as a mediocre and violent personality. Codreanu's charisma was not due to his personal qualities but was a combination between a "situational charisma"—due to the "charisma hunger" of Romanian society—and a charismatic agency responsible for its dispersion in innovative forms of political propaganda. The following section therefore turns our analysis from the alleged "exceptional qualities" of the charismatic leader to his "followers and their needs."

Charisma and Politics in Interwar Romania

In accounting for the emergence of charismatic bonding, Erik H. Erikson pointed out that "charisma hunger" is generally due to an "identity vacuum" triggered by a combination of sociopolitical upheaval and decline of traditional forms of religion, on the one hand, and psychological trends such as "fear" and "anxiety," on the other.[38] The sociopolitical upheaval of Greater Romania favored the emergence of charismatic types of authority on both grounds. Although Romania developed after 1918 as a "rationalized" mass parliamentary democracy, based on a liberal constitution and a multiparty system, the lack of democratic experience favored the emergence of personalized movements. A relevant example of postwar charismatic leadership may be seen in the political odyssey of General Alexandru Averescu in the early 1920s. Emerging from the war as a military hero, Averescu was venerated by the peasantry as a messianic savior. His tours in the countryside raised "waves of pagan

mysticism."[39] But his charisma was short-lived: after a sweeping electoral victory as leader of the People's Party, Averescu proved unable to manage his popularity and evolved in a clientelist direction, becoming a pawn of the dominant Liberal Party.

Codreanu was the most successful charismatic leader from the plethora of "saviors" that mushroomed in postwar Romania. His success can be explained by the fact that, unlike Averescu, Codreanu placed charisma at the very center of his political propaganda. He directed his efforts at building a movement of devoted followers and specifically targeted certain age or socio-professional categories, such as students. Moreover, Codreanu developed his charismatic claims in an anti-establishment and anti-democratic direction, thus directly benefiting from the crisis of the parliamentary system. Last but not least, his counter-ideology united two central dimensions of Romanian national ideology, religion and nationalism. This combination accounts for the Legion's proselytizing power and social composition.

Upon its establishment, the Legion functioned as a small religious confraternity of young males, having in 1929 an estimated number of roughly 400 to 1,000 members, the great majority young people between twenty and twenty-five.[40] They were based in two rooms in the Iaşi Cultural House, and in a chapel where they venerated the icon of the Archangel Michael. The warlike charismatic sect was often mocked for its religious bigotry, Legionaries being pejoratively named "Christians of the wood" due to their cult of the icon.

Starting in 1929, Codreanu set as the Legion's main task its "going to the masses," mostly through electoral contests organized in Moldova and Bessarabia. During these contests, Codreanu exploited an elaborated charismatic message and imagery, usually appearing to peasants on a white horse and wearing a white shirt with a black sign of the cross. His short speeches announced a new era for the righteous believers: "The hour of resurrection and of the Romanian's salvation is at hand. He who has faith, who struggles and suffers, he will be recompensed and blessed by his people." In addition, Legionary propaganda skillfully manipulated religious sensibilities, at a time when traditional forms of religiosity were waning. In 1928, eleven students imprisoned in Cluj claimed that Jesus Christ visited them in their prison cell.[41] Their claim was endorsed by Moţa, who proclaimed it to be "the beginning of a capital phase in the fate of our people and of humankind," namely, "the active intervention of the Divinity in the problem of the defense of humankind, in the question of the earth's liberation from

Satan's rule."[42] Later, during the 1930s, Romanian media reported numerous religious "visions," such as the "miracle" of Maglavit (1935), where the peasant Petrache Lupu claimed he saw God, or the "vision" of Maria Rusu, who claimed to have spoken to the Virgin Mary. As a result, as the Marxist intellectual Lucretiu Pătrăşcanu recalled, "a wave of religious exaltation swept over the whole country, from one end to the other."[43] These events were integrated by the Legionary press into their millennial message, as proof of divine signs.

Electoral gains were modest, however, due mainly to the hostile attitude of the state administration. Beginning in 1932–1933, the Legion took advantage of the pauperization of social life generated by the great economic depression and became a mass party, now assuming political prominence. First, the Legion expanded its regional basis. Its original nucleus originated in northern Moldova, an area that acquired a peripheral status following the 1859 political union between Moldova and Wallachia, and a steady economic pauperization allegedly due to the "Jewish invasion." Significantly, in his early manifestos, Codreanu appealed to Moldovans as "the poorest and most oppressed of all Romanians," urging them to unite "wherever they live in the Romanian lands."[44] Gradually, the Legion penetrated other historic regions as well. Building on partial electoral data, Eugen Weber argued in a pioneering article that the mass base of the Legion was recruited predominantly from the impoverished, overwhelmingly rural, and geographically isolated regions of Romania, such as northern and southern Moldova, southern Bessarabia, and the center of Transylvania.[45] His conclusions were challenged by Armin Heinen, who pointed out that the Legion was in fact more successful in regions exposed to sudden modernization, "advancing by means of industrialization, trade and communication, as well as more widely spread literacy."[46] It attracted active middle social categories, such as lawyers, priests, teachers, and students, who felt restricted in their upward social mobility. The Legion could penetrate these social categories using innovative political methods, among which charismatic propaganda figured predominantly.

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu among relics of Romanian soldiers who died in World War One, excavated by a Legionary team in 1937 at Predeal. The image is illustrative of the cult of the dead—and of the skull—that characterized Legionary ideology. The setting of the picture, as well as the lonely, contemplative and focused pose of Codreanu, is meant to suggest his charismatic "responsibility" and qualification.

Codreanu's charismatic image-building was further consolidated by the right-wing intellectuals joining the Legion in the period 1932–1934, most notably those grouped around the journal *Axa.* As the journalist and theologian Nichifor Crainic recalled, the merger between Codreanu's nucleus and the *Axa* group, which occurred at his own initiative, was at first a difficult enterprise, since those intellectuals portrayed Codreanu as "criminal and ignorant." However, in a short time "they all embraced him and opened the large gate through which were to enter tens of thousands of young intellectuals." [47]

The animator of a religious–nationalist trend generically called Orthodoxism, Crainic intended to channel Codreanu's movement into a nationalist party under his own direction. His association with the Legionaries was, however, short-lived, giving way to another recognized guru of the new generation, the journalist and Bucharest University professor Nae Ionescu. Under Ionescu's spiritual patronage, the Legion benefited from a new wave of intellectual sympathizers, followers of the controversial but admired professor. This intellectual input marked a turning point in the history of the Legion. Attracted by the spiritual renewal preached by the movement, new intellectual members or sympathizers further developed Codreanu's charismatic claims into a highly polished and effective propaganda offensive.

The testimony of Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, a historian of Jewish–Hungarian extraction from Transylvania, is relevant in this respect. (See Document 5.) He recounts the emotional

memory of an eight-year-old child confronted with the skillfully choreographed appearance of Codreanu at the peak of his political popularity in 1937, when propagandistic methods made his “charismatic aura” seem stronger than ever. The document first records the strong repulsion Codreanu exercised among certain groups of people, alluding to what Tucker called “counter-charisma.” Moreover, Codreanu’s appearance, as well as the entire Legionary performance, emphasized Orthodox religious rituals and biblical imagery, while the repression of the prefect gave it an extra aura of virtuous political resistance. [48]

The Legion and the Orthodox Church

Talavera’s recollection pointed out the similarities between the Legion’s rituals and several Orthodox religious practices. The core of Legionary ideology was based on religious themes, such as their proclaimed belief in God and in salvation. Legionary ceremonies centered on religious symbols, most importantly the cross and the icon, and took place according to a religious ritual, always starting with a liturgy officiated by an Orthodox priest. The charismatic nature of the Legion and its pseudo-religious practices thus account for its ambivalent relationship with the Orthodox Church, oscillating between periods of collaboration and stiff conflict.

The religious rituals and message of the Legion attracted numerous Orthodox priests, especially of lower ranks. Veiga estimated that in 1937, out of approximately 10,000 Orthodox priests, 2,000 converted to or sympathized with the Legion. [49] Consequently, in their propaganda, Legionary ideologues often identified Orthodox priests with the Legion: “A true priest will consequently be a Legionary through the very nature of things, exactly as, and again through the nature of things, a Legionary is the best son of the church.” [50] Nevertheless, Legionary ideology was ultimately not only different from but even opposed to the official theology of the church. This was underlined by Codreanu himself, who stated that “we make a great distinction between the line we are following and the line of the Christian church. The line of the church is a thousand meters above us. It reaches the perfect and the sublime. We cannot pull down this line for explaining our deeds.” [51] The distinction served to justify the usage of a millenarian message for accomplishing worldly, and secular aims through violent political action. Codreanu believed that this type of action was permitted only to

laymen, since priests could not use or encourage the use of arms.

On several occasions the Orthodox leadership showed sympathy for the anti-democratic and anti-Semitic message of the Legion, and put forward attempts at political collaboration. This temporary cooperation was directly linked to the institutional crisis of the Orthodox Church. The establishment of Greater Romania had changed the country's religious configuration, challenging the fragile equilibrium between the Orthodox Church and the state. The inclusion into Greater Romania of a large number of Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Protestants, and Jews added to religious pluralism, posing the dilemma of interconfessional relations. Although declared a "dominant" church by the 1923 constitution, the Orthodox Church felt underprivileged, chiefly as compared to the material power and political influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In striving to defend their institutional interests, Orthodox officials intensified their political lobbying and looked for potential political allies, such as the Legion. In spite of occasional collaboration, higher Orthodox hierarchs were nevertheless concerned by the active participation of clergy in Codreanu's movement. On 4 October 1935, the Holy Synod portrayed the Legionary working camps in the countryside as a hidden agency for attracting Orthodox believers and refused their voluntary assistance for church repairs. Reacting to the hostility shown by the Orthodox hierarchy, leading Legionary theologians, such as Gheorghe Racoveanu, argued instead for a natural alliance between the Legion and parochial priests: "It is surprising the lack of understanding from the upper hierarchy of the Orthodox Church. But communal priests know who is their real ally, and they support Codreanu's efforts, despite unavoidable risks." [52]

The divergence between the Orthodox establishment and the Legion is not surprising. As a charismatic movement, the Legion blended religious and secular elements. Although its message of theological inspiration attracted numerous lower-rank prelates, from the point of view of the established church the Legion was ultimately a heretical movement. At certain moments, the Orthodox leadership tried to use the Legion for pressuring the politicians. In the long run, this collaboration was harmful to church interests: the charismatic legitimization of the Legion was ultimately in competition with and subversive of the charismatic monopoly of the church. Later, therefore, the Orthodox Church acted as a pillar of the personal regime of Carol II (1938–1940) and supported his repression of the Legion.

Charismatic Leadership versus Party Organization

The charismatic nature of the Legion also shaped its organizational structure. In the Nazi Party, the *Führerprinzip* fused with a bureaucratic party organization, resulting in a peculiar syncretism called by Orlow "bureaucratic romanticism."[53] The Legion had a less structured organization, shaped by the spontaneity of the charismatic leadership. Initially, the Legion was dominated by the inner group of the *Vãcãreşteni*, who made up a charismatic elite and commonly endorsed major decisions. In August 1927 the Legion announced its first structural framework, made up of four sections: the first —and most important one—was "the youth section," having as a subsection the teenaged "Blood Brotherhood"; the second, "protecting" section was composed of "mature men"; the third, "assisting" section encompassed women; and the fourth, "international" section was made up of Romanians living abroad.[54] The leadership of the Legion was to be commonly exercised by a council composed of former or current student leaders, the latter being granted only a consultative vote; and by a senate made up of elected personalities over fifty years of age.

Despite its collective guiding forums, the Legion had in fact an authoritarian structure, based on the undisputed leadership of "the Captain"—also named the Chief of the Legion (*şeful Legiunii*)—and on a hierarchical line of charismatic commanders. The organizational basis of the Legion comprised grass-root cells made up of three to thirteen members (subsequently called "cuiburi"—"nests"). Several nests made up garrisons, which were further organized into sectors, counties, and regions. While nests and garrisons were led by charismatic leaders emerging spontaneously, the political leadership of regional and central structures was appointed by Codreanu and was directly responsible to him, in an effort to prevent rival exploitation of charisma that could result in defections. Codreanu added a military wing in 1930, whose name, the Iron Guard *(Garda de Fier)*, became synonymous with the entire Legion.

The growing membership of the Legion challenged its initial organization, necessitating an expansion of the Legion's line of command, the tightening of organizational discipline, and an increased role for ritual socialization. First, in order to cope with this development, starting in 1934 Codreanu put greater emphasis on the process of selection: in order to become "Legionaries," new members were subject to a probation period of up to three years. They had to pass a

series of initiating tests, allegorically described by Codreanu as “the mountain of suffering, the forest with wild beasts, and the marsh of desperation.” [55] In addition to regular screening of membership, Legionaries were subject to extended practical training and participated in a process of community socialization following detailed rituals centered on the cult of “the Captain” and aimed at emulating his personality (see Document 4). Second, new ranks of command were established, such as “Legionary instructor” and “deputy commander.” In order to prevent their autonomous consolidation, Legionary leaders could retain their posts for a maximum of two years. Deviant behavior was punished with a warning, temporary suspension, or even assassination. Most importantly, the circle of charismatic aristocracy composed initially of the *Vãcãreşteni* was considerably enlarged, so that in 1933 Codreanu established the rank of “Legionary commander,” awarded to prominent Legionaries such as Moţa, Ion Banea, and Mihai Stelescu. In 1936 Codreanu further enlarged the charismatic aristocracy by establishing the “Knights of the Annunciation,” a corpus of Legionary commanders selected on the basis of their combat merit, trust and loyalty.

The reorganization necessitated by the political growth of the Legion brought into question the power and influence of the founding group, resulting in factional competition and reciprocal accusations of deviation from the original charismatic goal. Reportedly, in 1934 four main factions were jostling for prominence: one led by Ion I. Moţa, another led by Mihai Stelescu, a third one led by Ion Dumitrescu, and last but not least, the intellectuals grouped around the journal *Axa.* [56] The balance among these factions was kept by Codreanu in a deliberate policy of divide and rule. The first defection from the Legion was that of Mihai Stelescu. Accusing Codreanu of political opportunism, Stelescu founded a rival organization in 1936 called *Cruciada Românismului*. For his “treason,” he was soon executed in a “ritual murder” by a Legionary squad. The balance among rival factions was further changed in 1937, when prominent Legionary cadres assembled a team for fighting in the Spanish civil war on Franco’s side. After taking part in several battles, on 13 January 1937 Ion I. Moţa and Vasile Marin were killed in action near Majadahonda. Moţa’s gesture was subject to conflicting interpretations. Based on his “testament,” Legionary propaganda portrayed it as a Christian sacrifice. More neutral contemporary analysis regarded it as a desperate attempt of the *Vãcãreşteni* to restore the idealism of the movement, though a spectacular action. Indeed, the dead Moţa shaped yet again the evolution

of the Legion. The two “martyrs” were buried with national funerals, the impressive ceremony being attended by numerous politicians, religious officials, and foreign diplomats. The death of Moţa and Marin inhibited the political reorganization of the Legion, provoking instead “a pietist turn.” [57] The cult of the two martyrs became a central feature of the Legion, closely related to that of the Captain.

Taking advantage of this propaganda boost, and in the absence of credible political alternatives, the Legion became a significant political player. Consequently, Carol II started to regard it as a potential partner in establishing his personal regime. Secret negotiations for political collaboration with Codreanu were conducted in February 1937 but proved fruitless. Codreanu’s account of the meeting with King Carol II illustrates his understanding of his leadership as charismatic. To the king’s request to be proclaimed “the Captain” of the Legion, Codreanu replied that “as the Legionaries had sworn their faith to me and not to another person, this faith, this attachment cannot be a political object.” [58]

This refusal led to open confrontation. In the 1937 parliamentary elections, Codreanu joined an anti-Carlist political alliance and won a major electoral success: his party, All for the Fatherland, received 437,378 votes, representing 15.6 percent of the total number of the electorate, and 66 parliamentary mandates. But the Legion was unable to take advantage of this success. On 10 February 1938, Carol II staged a coup d’état and assumed authoritarian powers. The Legion’s position rapidly deteriorated. On 17–19 April, Codreanu was arrested. After two consecutive summary trials, he was sentenced to ten years of forced labor. Moreover, fearing his political resurrection with German help, Carol II ordered the assassination of Codreanu. On the night of 29–30 November 1938, Codreanu was strangled together with thirteen other Legionaries. His body was buried in the courtyard of the Jilava prison, burned with acid, and covered with a thick layer of cement.

Despite this desperate attempt to eradicate Codreanu’s charisma, the spirit of “the Captain” obsessed his followers more than ever. Revenge was quick to follow. On 21 September 1939, a Legionary “death team” assassinated Prime Minister Armand Cãlinescu in a public square in Bucharest. After that, they stormed the national radio, publicly announced the avenging of their captain, and gave themselves up to the police. They were carried back to the public square and executed. Their bodies were displayed for several days for public opprobrium. During the next several days, the symbolic violence of the state was abandoned in

favor of mass repression: all over the country, 253 Legionary leaders were executed without trial. The confrontation between the two "systems of belief" had reached its peak. Unable to tame or use them for his own purpose, Carol II had the Legionaries killed by their own lawless methods as the only effective way to counter their fanatical terrorism.

Factionalism and the Routinization of Charisma

Codreanu's death opened the question of succession to charismatic leadership. On the one hand, there were no rules of succession, and Codreanu had not designated anyone as a legitimate successor. On the other hand, the waves of repression against the Legion in 1938–39 almost completely eliminated its original leadership, promoting second-rank Legionaries to the forefront and generating factionalism. In a secret report, the Hungarian political secretary in Bucharest judged that in late 1940 the Iron Guard was divided among three main factions: the group gathered around Horia Sima, a dynamic local leader from the Banat, which was the most pragmatic and least Orthodox in its orientation; the group composed of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's family, namely his father, Ion Zelea Codreanu, and his brothers; and "the Moţa-Marin" group, which wanted to strengthen the religious character of the movement.[59] In this context, several options appeared for the routinization of Codreanu's charisma. The first one lay, unsurprisingly, in the selection of a new charismatic leader. After a long period of confusion, Horia Sima, representing the less radical wing of the Legion, overcame all competition and assumed leadership. Unable to put forward claims of charismatic legitimacy, Sima was invested as the leader of the Legion on 6 September 1940 by a body created *ad hoc* at his own initiative, the Legionary Forum.[60] His legitimacy was soon contested by a second option for the routinization of charisma: its transfer to a kin of Codreanu. Asserting that he was "the Captain's father and his earthly representative," on 28 September Ion Zelea Codreanu and his followers stormed the Legionary Green House in Bucharest, in an unsuccessful attempt to install "charisma by kinship."[61]

After the loss of much of Transylvania to Hungary and of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union forced Carol II to abdicate, General Ion Antonescu stepped in to fill the political vacuum on 6 September 1940. This change opened the Legion's way to power. On 14 September Antonescu proclaimed the "National– Legionary state" that lasted until January 1941.

The Legion became the ruling party but had to share executive power with the army. Upon the Legion's accession to power, its propaganda exploited a third option for the routinization of charisma: the cult of the dead leader and of the Legionary martyrs. The ritual basis of the new political regime was the exhumation, public burial, and rehabilitation of the Legionary "martyrs," retrospectively regarded by Sima as the most important task justifying the Legion's accession to power.[62] The exhumation of Codreanu's remains, and those of the two groups charged with political assassinations, the "Decemvirs" and the "Nicadors," on 21–23 November 1940, occasioned a strong reaffirmation of Codreanu's charisma, as the foundation of Legionary ideology. On the day of the reburial, *Cuvîntul*, the leading Legionary newspaper, wrote: "It is the day of the Captain's resurrection. He is resurrected, as he promised, according to the Gospel. He is resurrected, rising from the grave to present to us again Romania itself, buried by this sinful age." In a radio interview, philosopher Emil Cioran, at the time a youngster in his twenties, provided a powerful endorsement of Codreanu's charismatic cult: "With the exception of Jesus, no other dead being has been so present among the living. Has anybody even thought about forgetting him? 'From this moment on, our country is being led by a dead man,'a friend was telling me on the bank of the Seine. This dead man spread a perfume of eternity over our human dung and brought back the sky over Romania."[63]

Codreanu's reburial prompted a terrifying orgy of Legionary vendettas: on the night of 25–26 November, sixty-five former dignitaries considered guilty of persecutions against the Legion were executed without trial. The Legion had thus finally succeeded in its goals. The old order collapsed under its blows, and with it all the enemies of the Legion were punished. But it was the triumph of nihilism, criminal revenge, and self-destruction. The subsequent rule of the Legion was characterized by tension between its charismatic nature and the need for a pragmatic political orientation. Internal contradictions aggravated the conflict of interest between the Legion, as the political basis of the new regime, and General Ion Antonescu, as its executive head, paving the way for the Legion's political elimination. On 21–23 January 1941, after the failure of a chaotic Legionary rebellion that was meant to transfer full governing power into their hands, the Legion was disbanded and its leaders exiled. According to Sima's own appraisal, the Legion had thus proved itself incapable of "moving from the revolutionary phase to the governing phase." The political ineffectiveness of the Legion was direct ly linked to its charismatic nature. As Weber pointed out, "all

charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests. Every hour of its existence brings it nearer to the end." [64]

The exhumation of the corpses of Codreanu and the members of the Legionary terrorist groups called the "Decemvirs" and the "Nicadors," killed at the order of King Carol II in November 1938 and buried in the courtyard of the Jilava prison under a thick layer of cement. The ceremony, which took place in November 1940 under the "National-Legionary Regime," was attended by high state representatives and Orthodox clerics, and is illustrative of the cult of the dead leader as a form of routinization of his charisma.

Conclusions

This chapter proposes a reinterpretation of the ideology and practice of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, following Weber's theoretical and methodological perspective on the charismatic type of authority. It also places the Legion within the larger sociopolitical context of interwar Romania. In so doing, it redirects the study of the Legion toward the conflict of values between the official hegemonic culture and a resistant youth counterculture. While students of the Legion have so far explained Codreanu's charisma by his personal magnetism, this essay asserts that Codreanu put forward claims for charismatic leadership based on belief in his messianic call for a divine mission and his promise of salvation. In analyzing Codreanu's leadership, the analysis draws on the test of charismatic leadership developed by Robert Tucker, based on such criteria as sense of mission, capacity for mobilization, and consistency of leadership.

In addition, the chapter addresses the relationship between Codreanu's leadership and the charismatic movement it generated. Codreanu's charismatic claims emerged in the context of the nationalist student movements, which provided him both with a political cause of national importance and with a favorable environment for proselytizing that generated

a nucleus of close followers. In analyzing the transformation of a regional student organization into a messianic nationalist movement of the “young generation,” the argument here rejects a “modernizing” perspective on charisma, according to which the appeal of Codreanu’s leadership was due to the existence of a “primitive mentality” in a developing country. Instead, it asserts that Codreanu’s leadership exhibited a conjunction between a “situational charisma,” generated by the sociopolitical upheaval of Greater Romania, and a charismatic agency, based on his own self-identification and Moţa’s ideological creativity.

The chapter also points out the responsibility of members of the Romanian political elite, who supported the Legion with the intention of manipulating it for their own political purposes, and of those intellectuals who paid lip service to Codreanu’s leadership, actively contributing to the merger between the new nationalism of the young generation and Codreanu’s charismatic cult. This alliance resulted in a complex ideological syncretism among transcendental charismatic calls, local cultural codes—such as Orthodox ritualism and traditional nationalist symbols—and the messianic discourse of the young generation.

Its charismatic ideology shaped the organization of the Legion. It was structured around Codreanu’s leadership and personality, and dominated by a circle of close followers, as well as by a hierarchical line of charismatic leaders emerging at the local level. In the long run, the evolution of the Legion exhibited underlying tensions between its charismatic nature and the need for a more bureaucratic party organization, accounting for factional competition, experiments in the “routinization” of Codreanu’s charisma, its inefficient rule and rapid fall from power. The theory of charisma thus proves an essential analytical tool in the study of the Legion of the Archangel Michael in interwar Romania. On a more general level, this case study asserts that, instead of adding to the stalemated debate concerning the “true” nature of universalized concepts such as “fascism,” students of interwar right-wing political movements might benefit more from a broader theoretical approach in order to identify the specifics of their ideologies.

Sources

Document 1:

I do not know how it happened but it seems that I broke loose from that cradle of humanity and strain, of bravery and peace

that dominated the village of the Balşeni. And, as this book proves, although it seems hardly believable, I have found myself another youth somewhere else, and I have plunged into another life. (It indeed proves true the story about the seven lives of the Romanian.) I have thus become a city-dweller, I have taken another name, and I have entered the whirlpool of today's life. Here, I struggled into a world alienated from the old customs and invaded by pagans. I wrestled against it and against all its kikes and scoundrels, in the same way as I jumped to the very heart of the danger during the time I used to prop up oxen on the slopes of the mountain gaps. Quietness and contentment in this world I could not find, I hated it and it hated me back deadly. It is clear that the fate of the rebellious—but ultimately triumphant — slave was predestined to me, too, as to my forerunners.

In this fight I used the pen as well. As such, mostly at random, for the needs of the battle, and not at all for giving Romanian writing unforgettable charm. It is only for the benefit of the fighters that I include here some of the articles from these years of youthful struggle from 1922 until today… Not even a clean Romanian language should be sought for here. I know that it will not be found, and this is the only criticism that I cannot take with a light heart. But it is I myself who first make this criticism here, openly, because reading again articles written fourteen years ago, and even the later ones, before handing them to the printer, I was saddened by the multitude of foreign words ("cranii" … [skulls]) and of the foreign forms of writing, which had overwhelmed me as they had all the others, almost my entire generation. This alienation against which we are fighting, the calamity to which we react, penetrated even us, the "nationalists": in spirit, in faith, in our way of thinking, in mores, in language, and in customs. The fortunate thing is that it did not terminate everything and that it still retains so much strength in us as to overcome the obstacles of this century of confusion and alienation, and allow us to be able to return to our origins, and, once returned there, to resume the broken line of our life in the Romanian house, community and spirit, and to elevate this people to the material and spiritual power and fruitfulness it deserves.

This is how it should be understood and received, this book to which I have given the title of that article which evokes one of the most intense feelings of a fighting army: the burial of its comrade dead in battle.

Let me now abandon the aristocratic language and return to myself. I was saying that I hated the world of this second life of mine. And it hated me back mortally, as it hated all my Legionary comrades, and my Captain. The old world, that of

Nuţu Doncii, in which are rooted all our feelings and longings, we do not find anywhere anymore. It was terminated by this new century with its politics and discord, with its denial of God and love for foreigners and for all that comes from others, the century which tramples under its foot our way of life, with its strengths, its qualities, and its beauty.

As such, our soul, tied to another world, strolls around today in a life which is not ours. Facing today's world, we feel strangers, we cannot find in it any other sense except that of terminating it in order to revive the old times and to increase their beauty, their strength, and rightful Romanian order.

It would thus seem that I and my comrades are a kind of strange being with two lives, a kind of zombie risen in an extinguished world to bear the spirit of fear in today's world. This is exactly the way we are. We are uprooted souls who, carrying their restlessness over a ruined life, will not find peace in any grave until we elevate again what others have scattered, wasted, and cursed.

The people of today's century should stop for a moment their lives of ease and indifference and listen to the strange noises that rack mysterious depths and yell like the night winds. And this is to be heard and known: the terrible rule of the zombies is approaching.

Source: Ion I. Moţa, "Autobiografie (în loc de introducere)," in *Cranii de Lemn. Articole 1922–1936*, 4th ed. (Bucharest, 1940), 9–11.

Document 2:

Confronted with the situation described above, I decided to go together with none of the parties. Not that I wanted to renounce [the fight], but to start the organization of the youth on my own responsibility, by my own head and soul, to continue the fight, and not to capitulate.

During these hours of agitation and dilemma, we remembered the icon that protected us in the Vãcãreşti prison. We decided to sit clos-er and to continue the fight under the protection of the same Holy Icon. To this end, it was transported from the shrine of Saint Spiridon where I had left it three years ago, to our center in Iaşi.

The Vãcãreşti group joined immediately in these thoughts. After several days, I called the *Vãcãreşteni* and the few students who remained tied to us for a meeting in Iaşi, on Friday 24 June 1927 at ten o'clock, in my room on Florilor Street, No. 20. Several minutes before the meeting, I wrote in a chronicle the following order, registered as Number One:

"Today, Friday 24 June 1927 (Saint John the Baptist), 10 p.m. 'The Legion of Archangel Michael'was established under my

leadership. Let him come here who has an unlimited faith. Let him stay aside who has doubts. I name Radu Mironovici as chief of the guard at the Icon.

This first meeting lasted one minute, as long as it took me to read the above order, after which the participants withdrew in order to decide if they felt determined enough and spiritually strong enough to enter such an organization, which had no program, the only program being my previous life of fighting and the prison life of my comrades.

Even for the members of the Vãcãreşti group I left time for reflection and inspection of their consciences, to see if they had any doubts or reservations, since once starting on this path they had to continue it during their entire lives without any hesitation.

This was our intimate state of mind that gave birth to the Legion: we were not interested if we would survive, if we would fall exhausted, or if we would die. Our aim was different: to go ahead, united. Going together, united, along with God and with the justice of the Romanian people, no matter what fate this would give us, defeat or death, it would be blessed and would bear fruit for the Romanian people. There are defeats and deaths that resurrect a people to life, as well as certain kinds of victories that weaken it, Professor Iorga once said.

We were now alone as in a desert, and we had to find a way in life by our own power. We gathered together even closer around the Icon. And the more the hardship of life overwhelmed us and the blows of the world hit us, the more we would stay under the shield of Archangel Saint Michael, and under the protection of his sword. For us he was not a photograph on an icon anymore, but we felt him alive. There, at the Icon, we guarded day and night, with a lit candle."

Source: Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pentru Legionari*, 3rd ed. (Bucharest, 1940), 1: 276–77.

Document 3:

We therefore want to build, and—with God's help—we will build, a cell of shining light, which will act, in other words it will save, of its own accord. We are not creators of light. That is to be found only in God. We are thus not the creators of the desired salvation, but we want to be the recipients of this saving force, which we seek in a different place, in the only place where it is to be found: in God. Therefore: to the Icon!

This house is—naturally—a system. It already exists. And, like every living system, it is moved by a force. In the system of human societies, this force can be captured only through an organization. Therefore, our system has to have an

organization, and it has it. Our organization cannot be born and developed in a healthy way without order, hierarchy, or, especially, a Leader (*Conducãtor*). Thus our organization has a leader whom no one elected but who has the consensus of all those who, seduced by a mysterious force, have come to constitute, under the leader's direction, the disciplined nests of the organization. Our leader is Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

Our system, with its own order and leadership, gathered around the pillar of its faith in God (its only supporting pillar), starts today, in front of the world, its work, its effort, to which is linked our only hope of salvation. We have the creed that, this time, we go straight to the target, and victory is assured. People will be served and saved, because we do not intend to deviate a single moment from the Icon and its order. It is not our work anymore, but it is its own, and that is invincible.

As an ending we imprint here a confession: we firmly believe, and see on the horizon, in the line of our path, unknown victories and divine wonders. We do not announce them here, to be believed at once (we know that even the contrary can happen), but because tomorrow, when they will be fulfilled, when there will be poured on us the unbelievable gifts of the divine mercy bearing salvation, we should have proof that we have foreseen it, and that we have judged well.

Until then, to those who are strong enough in their souls to understand us, grant us your approval, and go together with us from now on. We send our call: to the Icon! The others, the multitudes, will come later, but they will surely come.

Source: Ion I. Moţa, "La Icoanã," *Pãmântul Strãmoşesc* 1 (August 1927) 1: 9–10.

Document 4:

For Ismet's sake, the boys established complete order in prison life. The engineer Clime took command of the several hundred prisoners, combined Legionary discipline with that of the military, formed teams for kitchen duty and cleaning, and divided the day into hours of instruction, songs, discussions, and entertainment. Nobody from the prison's personnel interfered anymore. In the first days, it turned out that one [prisoner] was missing: he jumped out of the truck on the way to Jilava and disappeared. The boys sent word to the city asking for a volunteer prisoner from among the free Legionaries, so that the commander of the prison did not get into trouble with the superior authority! The immense cellar seemed an oven on fire: it vibrated with Legionary songs. I was hearing most of them for the first time. It was the time when those glorifying assassinations did not yet appear. What heroic, seducing songs! And what words animated by

love of the country and of the Romanian people! It was difficult for a soul to resist this wave of creator enthusiasm, no matter how dry it was. The personnel of the prison knew them by heart. The song was the great dynamic force of the Legionary movement—this bizarre mixture of sublime moral and of abjection. In stormy, innovating upsurges of unlimited sacrifice and of demonic criminality! These boys were all wearing the icon of Jesus Christ or of the Virgin Mary, prayed regularly in the morning and evening, and still spoke with infinite tenderness of the "heroes" who killed! If later years revealed to me the creative will and impulse toward sacrifice of this youth, prison revealed to me its most intimate elements, the black and white mixture of its good and bad instincts, unfortunately all equally disciplined, within their own line. "The Captain's" way of being lived in every boy. "The Captain" was a dogma, a god, a supernatural existence. In that particular moment, nobody knew where he was or what he was doing. It was not possible that "the Captain" was not well where he was! He was working, he did not sleep. He would arrange it in such a way that on a happy day we would all get out of prison victoriously. In their burning feelings, some felt offended that I called him Corneliu instead of "the Captain" and that I did not take part in his deification. Then I realized that his entire character, in a strange phenomenon of osmosis, was absorbed in the marrow of the movement itself and constituted its fatality, which nothing could change anymore. During this time, "the Captain" was safe in Bucharest. For four and a half months the vigilant police of the capital could not discover him, because he was protected by Elena Lupescu herself, as he and nobody else told me on the night when he appeared at the trial! He did not suspect, poor him, that this refined protection was to lead him in several years to the same fate as I. G. Duca, assassination.
Source: Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre* (Bucharest, 1991), 257–58.

Document 5:

Though very young at the time, this writer remembers well the turbulent days of the autumn of 1937, when the most hotly contested elections of the interwar period were being fought in Transylvania. As a child of eight, I visited with my parents some relatives and family friends in a village deep in the Apuseni Mountains, the heart of Romanian Transylvania, home of the moţi and the birthplace of the legendary Avram Iancu. In the evening, when the intelligentsia gathered in the salon of the owner of the local saw mill (a Hungarian Jew), the venerable dowager duchesses of village society

discussed but one thing, the visit of Codreanu, the dreaded Captain of the Iron Guard, the next day. There was simply no limit to the abuse these ladies and gentleman, Hungarians of the Christian and Jewish faith, heaped on him.

One of the ladies who had seen him in Târgu Mureş the year before spoke of him as if she had seen the monster's head, but dared not describe it. Something of an adventurer by nature, I decided I must take a closer look at this fabulous being, whatever the cost. The next day, I proceeded to carry out this decision. My best friend, the son of the local Orthodox priest, older than I by four years, provided some pieces of peasant costume, and two conspirators [us] headed toward the church yard, where the Legionary meeting was to take place.

The little square before the church teemed with peasants dressed in their colorful Sunday best. Many of them had walked dozens of miles to get there, and there were many, too many gendarmes from the local gendarme station. The prefect of the district of Turda had, as officials of corrupt regimes often do, administered a pin-prick to exasperate rather than a blow to crush. He had forbidden Codreanu to speak, but had not outlawed the meeting itself. And a crowd of simple miserable peasants swelled until the churchyard could hold no more.

There was suddenly a hush in the crowd. A tall, darkly handsome man, dressed in the white costume of a Romanian peasant, rode into the yard on a white horse. He halted close to me, and I could see nothing monstrous or evil about him. On the contrary, his childlike, sincere smile radiated over the miserable crowd, and he seemed to be with it, yet mysteriously apart from it. Charisma is an inadequate word to define the strange force that emanated from this man. He was more aptly part of the forest, of the mountains, of the storms on the snowcovered peak of the Carpathians, and of the lakes and rivers. And so he stood amid the crowd. He had no need to speak; his silence was eloquent. It seemed to be stronger than me, stronger than the order of the prefect who denied him speech. An old whitehaired peasant woman made the sign of the cross on her breast and whispered tous, "The Emissary of the Archangel Michael." Then the sad little church bell began to toll, and the service, which invariably preceded Legionary meetings, began. Deep impressions, created in the soul of the child, die hard. In more than half a century, I have never forgotten my meeting with Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

Source: Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Jassy, Portland, Oxford: Center for Romanian Studies, 1998), 343–345.

NOTES

1. See Eugen Weber, "Romania," in idem, ed., *Varieties of Fascism* (Princeton, N.: Princeton University Press, 1964), 96–105. Stanley G. Payne also judged that the Legion was "the most unusual mass movement of interwar Europe" in *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 115.

2. On interwar movements of "cultural purification," with direct reference to the Legion, see Anthony D. Smith, "Culture, Community, and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism," *International Affairs* 72 (July 1996): 445–58.

3. The usage of the term "ideology" in reference to Legionary propaganda may seem intriguing, given its heterogeneous nature, its contradictions, and its numerous intellectual borrowings. This essay does not define Legionary ideology as an "ism" comparable to other, more coherent and elaborated "isms," such as communism or nationalism, but uses the term "ideology" for describing the Legionary "world-view," based on the writings of the main ideologues of the movement, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Ion I. Moţa, and Horia Sima, and of other Legionary intellectuals such as Ion Banea, Ilie Imbrescu, Mihail Polihroniade, and Nicolae Roşu. For minimal versus enlarged definitions of the Legionary "doctrine," see Dan Pavel, "Legionarismul," in Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, ed., *Doctrine politice: Concepte universale şi realităţi româneşti* (Iaşi: Polirom, 1998), 212–28. For an attempt to grant fascism "full ideological status," see Roger Griffin, "General Introduction," in *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1–12.

4. In the 1960s there began a wave of scholarly interest in the study of the Legion. See Eugen Weber, "Romania," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1965), 501–74; idem, "The Men of the Archangel," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1 (1966): 101–26; Stephen Fischer-Galati, "Fascism in Romania," in Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Native Fascism in the Successor States*, 1918–1945 (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1971), 112–22; Francis L. Carsten, "Anti-Semitism and Anti-Communism: The Iron Guard," in *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 181–93; Z. Barbu, "Psycho-Historical and Sociological Perspectives on the Iron Guard, the Fascist Movement of Romania," in Stein Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet, and Jan Petter Myklebust, eds., *Who Were the Fascists: Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen: Scandinavian University Press, 1980), 379– 394; and Radu Ioanid, *The Sword of the Archangel: Fascist Ideology in Romania* (Boulder, Col.: East European Monographs, 1990). For a comparative view of fascism in Romania and Hungary, see Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). For the most complete monograph to date, see Armin Heinen, *Die Legion* "*Erzengel Michael*", in *Rumänien: Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation: Ein Beitrag zum Problem des internationalen Faschismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986). Quotations in this chapter

are from the Romanian translation, *Legiunea "Arhanghelului Mihail." Mişcare socială şi organizaţie politică* (Bucharest, 1998).

5. I use the generic name of the Legion for the whole range of successive political movements based on Codreanu's leadership, namely the Legion of the Archangel Michael established in 1927; the Iron Guard, created in 1931 as a political section and subsequently identified with the Legion itself; and the All for the Fatherland party, established in 1933. The movement was also known under the generic name of the "Legionary Movement" (*Mişcarea Legionară*).

6. Current attempts at reviving the Iron Guard heavily exploit the messianic "heroimage" of Codreanu. See the writings of the Legionary émigré Faust Brădescu, *Corneliu-Zelea Codreanu: Erou Neo-Cosmogon* (Madrid: Editura Carpaţi, 1987), in which he refers to Codreanu as "the symbol of the Divine Will, the metha-human." Other émigré Legionaries, such as Constantin Papanace and Ştefan Palaghiţă, claim the virtuous charismatic "purity" of the Legion's initial leadership, represented by the duo CodreanuMoţa, denouncing the leadership of Horia Sima as an illegitimate succession which distorted the spirit of the Legion and was responsible for its abominable crimes. See Constantin Papanace, *Destinul unei Generaţii* (Rome: Biblioteca Verde, 1952); and Ştefan Palaghiţă, *Garda de Fier: Spre reinvierea României* (Buenos Aires: S. Palaghiţă, 1951).

7. Max Weber, "The Pure Types of Legitimate Authority" in S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1968), 46.

8. Max Weber, "The Nature of Charismatic Authority and Its Routinization" in S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber on Charisma*, 48.

9. Max Weber, "Charisma and Its Transformation," in *Economy and Society: An Out-line of Interpretative Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2:1116.

10. Max Weber, "Sociology of Charismatic Authority," and "The Nature of Charismatic Authorithy," in Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber on Charisma*, 18, 49.

11. Max Weber, "Charisma and Its Transformation," 1114.

12. A recent typology of fascism was elaborated by Stanley Payne, who argued that fascist movements in Europe were united by the following common features: "a new functional relationship for the social and economic systems, eliminating the autonomy … of large scale capitalism," "a new order in foreign affairs," and "highly ethnicist as well as extremely nationalist" priorities. A second set of characteristics is represented by the fascist negations: anti-fascism, anti-communism, and anti-conservatism. Finally, fascist movements also exhibited certain features of style and organization, such as charismatic leadership. See Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995). The existence of universal features of fascism remains, however, a matter of academic controversy. For a refutation of the concept of "generic fascism," see Gilbert Allardyce, "What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept," *American Historical Review* 84 (1979): 367–88.

13. See Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967); Dietrich Orlow*, The History of the Nazi Party: 1919–1933* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969); and Hans Gerth, "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition," *American Journal of Sociology* 45 (January 1940): 517–41.

14. This view is mainly represented by Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Pimlico, 1993). Cohn concluded that totalitarian ideologies of the twentieth century, such as fascism and communism, were millennial movements of the poor, the deprived, and the déclassé.

15. Barbu, "Psycho-Historical and Sociological Perspectives," 393.

16. George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

17. Cf. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Livezeanu focuses on the genesis of the Legion in the 1920s, placing it in the context of the nation-building process within Greater Romania and linking it with inter-ethnic and rural-urban social cleavages, most manifest in the educational system. This section builds on her perspective, and highlights the intrinsic relationship between the social position and charismatic ideological view of the main legionary ideologues.

18. See Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 203. Wohl distinguishes between "the notion of generation as thirty-year intervals of genealogical time" and "historical generations" encompassing people united by common beliefs and historical destiny. Unfortunately, his analysis of discourses on the "new generation" in postwar Europe is missing a chapter on Romania.

19. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*.

20. On the concept of "nationalizing nationalsim," see Rogers W. Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 4–5.

21. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*, 234, 300–301.

22. Ibid., chapter 6, esp. 235–43.

23. For a comprehensive analysis of citizenship legislation in the Old Kingdom, see Constantin Iordachi, "The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of 'Non-Citizens'in Romania, 1866–1918," *European Review of History* 8 (August 2001): 157–86.

24. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, 3rd. ed. (Bucharest, 1940), 1: 58.

25. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pămaˆntul Strămoşesc* (Iaşi) 2 (15 May 1928), 10: 4.

26. As Max Weber pointed out, the practice of lay/political patronizing of religious ceremonies such as baptisms and weddings originates directly from a charismatic type of authority. The practice

has a long tradition in Romanian political life. It also held a central role in Legionary ritualism. According to the statutes of the Legion, each male member had an obligation to become, within a maximum of five months after his enrollment, the godfather of five young couples, and to subsequently attract them into the Legion. See "Organizarea Legiunii 'Arhanghelul Mihail'" *Pămaˆntul Strămoşesc* (Iaşi) I (15 September 1927), 4: 1.

27. For the main stages of the process of charismatization, see Guenther Roth, "Socio-Historical Model and Developmental Theory: Charismatic Community, Charisma of Reason, and the Counterculture," *American Sociological Review* 40 (April 1975): 148–57.

28. See Ion I. Moţa (alias Zyrax), "Problema minoritară în România," *Axa* 2 (22 January 1933), 5: 2.

29. Franz Neumann, "Anxiety and Politics," in *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State: An Essay in Political and Legal Theory* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press 1957), 279.

30. Horia Sima, quoted in Crăcea, ed., *Dezvăluiri Legionare*, (Bucharest, 1955) 2: 209. Legionary anti-Semitism thus resembled the type of "demonologic anti-Semitism" analyzed by Norman Cohn in *Histoire d'un mythe: La "conspiration" juive et les Protocoles des Sages de Sion* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

31. As Norman Cohn pointed out in *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, proponents of millenarianism interpret biblical texts in a personal manner, by regarding religious salvation as collective, terrestrial, total, and miraculous, through the intervention of supernatural agents.

32. Ion I. Moţa, "The Spasm and Its Conclusion," in *Almanahul Societăţii "Petru Maior"* (Cluj: Cartea Românească, 1929), 207.

33. See Ion Banea, *Capitanul* (Sibiu, n.d.).

34. Cf. *Pământul Strămoşesc*, 4 (10 March 1930), 1.

35. Horia Sima, quoted in Crăcea, *Dezvăluiri Legionare*, 2: 210.

36. Codreanu, *Cărtica şefului de cuib*, 42. On Tucker's criteria, see Robert C. Tucker, "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership," *Daedalus* 97 (1998): 731–56.

37. In 1916, when Romania entered the world war, the young Codreanu wanted to join the regiment of his father in the military campaign against Austria–Hungary and could barely be forced to return back home. In 1917, at the age of nineteen, he attempted to set up a clandestine organization for fighting an "imminent" Soviet invasion. See Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*.

38. Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (London: Faber, 1959).

39. Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii* (Bucharest: Machiavelli, 1996), 6 [1919–1922]:46.

40. Heinen, *Legiunea "Arhanghelului Mihail"*, 139.

41. "Minunea cerească întimplată zilele trecute în închisoarea Clujului. Cu cine e Isus!" *Pământul Strămoşesc*, 2 (1 February 1928),

3: 3–4.

42. Ion I. Moţa, "… Isus apare în închisori!" *Pământul Strămoşesc* 2 (15 February 1928), 4: 8–9.

43. Lucretiu Pătrăşcanu, *Sub trei dictaturi* (Bucharest: 1970), 56; see also Nichifor Crainic, "Vizită la Maglavit," *Sfarmă Piatră* 1 (1936): 8.

44. Codreanu, *Scrisori studenţeşti din închisoare* (Iaşi, 1925), 7–8.

45. Weber, "Men of the Archangel," 110–113. He concluded that the Legion was a populist movement developed in areas where there was a political vacuum which could be exploited (118).

46. Heinen, *Legiunea "Arhanghelului Mihail*," 470.

47. Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre* (Bucharest, 1994), 237.

48. Talavera's recollection of his childhood fascination with Codreanu is very striking, especially since it comes from a Hungarian Jew from Transylvania who suffered "every Nazi persecution, except death." In fact, other quotations reveal Talavera's open admiration of Codreanu. "More than half a century later, if one ignores the Legion's later actions, it is not easy to condemn the Legion's ideas. If only all Legionaries had been like Codreanu, Moţa, or the Transylvanian Ion Banea!" See Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga. A Biography,* 2nd ed. (Iaşi, Portland, Oxford: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1998), 348.

49. Francisco Veiga, *La Mística del Ultranacionalismo: Historia de la Guardia de Hierron. Rumania, 1919–1941* (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1989). Published in Romanian as *Istoria Grăzii de Fier, 1919–1941: Mistica ultranationalismului*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1995), 231.

50. Ilie Imbrescu, *Biserica şi mişcarea legionară* (Bucharest, 1939), 201.

51. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, "Mişcarea legionară şi Biserica" in Nicu Crăcea, *Dezvăluiri Legionare* (Bucharest, 1995), 2: 31.

52. Gheorghe Racoveanu, "Mişcarea legionară şi Biserica", in Crăcea, *Dezvaluiri*, 57.

53. Orlow*, History of the Nazi Party*, 80.

54. "Legiunea Arhanghelul Mihail," *Pământul Strămoşesc* 1 (15 August 1927), 2: 3–4; and "Organizarea Legiunii Arhanghelul Mihail," *Pământul Strămoşesc* 1 (1 October 1927), 5: 3–4.

55. Codreanu, *Cărticica*, Part IX, Points 56–60.

56. Dragos, Zamfirescu, *Legiunea Arhangelului Mihail: De la mit la realitate* (Bucharest, 1997), 206.

57. Francisco Vega, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier*, 211–36.

58. Quoted in Kurt Treptow, "Populism in Twentieth-Century Romanian Politics," in J. Held, ed., *Populism in Eastern Europe* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1991), 208.

59. Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Diplomatic Reports, Bucharest, File K63, (10 November 1940), 66–67

60. Heinen, *Legiunea "Arhanghelului Mihail"*, 416.

61. Ion Zelea Codreanu, *O mărturie* (Iaşi, 1941), 13, 15. The Ion Zelea Codreanu and the Sima factions are giving conflicting accounts of this event.

62. Horia Sima, *Doctrina legionară* (Bucharest, 1995).

63. Emil Cioran, "Profilul interior al Căpitanului," *Glasul strămoşesc* 3 (25 December 1940), 10.

64. Weber, "Charisma and Its Transformation," 1120.

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